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GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY

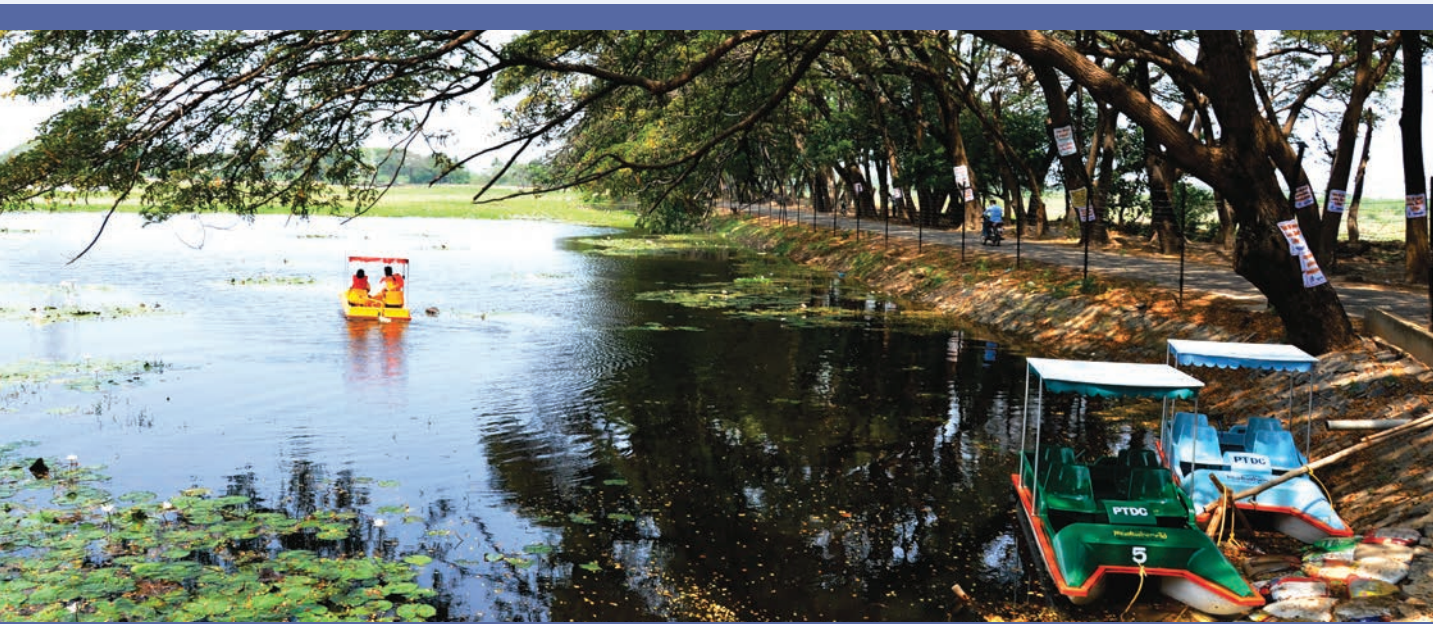
Address by

Dr. KIRAN BEDI

Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor

to

THE PUDUCHERRY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Velrampet Lake, Puducherry

24th July, 2020

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அவைஅறிந்து ஆராய்ந்து சொல்லுக சொல்லின்
தொகைஅறிந்த தூய்மை யவர். **– குறள்**

Men pure in heart, who know of words the varied force, should to their audience known adapt their well-arranged discourse.

– *Kural*

Hon'ble Speaker and Hon'ble Members of Legislature,

I feel greatly honoured to address the fifth session of the 14th Legislative Assembly of this Union Territory.

2. This Government led by the Hon'ble Chief Minister continues to be focused on the socio-economic development of the people of Union Territory of Puducherry, with specific emphasis on protecting the vulnerable sections of the society. It is a matter of great pride to all of us that this Union Territory has

secured not only the first position in four good governance indicators *viz.*, (i) human resource development, (ii) public health, (iii) justice, and (iv) law and order but also ranked top among the 7 Union Territories in the Good Governance Index released by the Government of India for the first time on Good Governance Day on 25th December, 2019. I heartedly congratulate the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Ministers and the bureaucrats on this significant achievement.

3. I am glad to note that the overall law and order situation in the Union Territory of Puducherry in the preceding year has remained largely peaceful. This is evidenced by the fact that the Union Territory of Puducherry has secured first position in maintenance of Law and Order among the Union Territories as per the Good Governance Index released by the Government of India. Due to constant vigil, timely response, and preventive action there is perfect communal harmony throughout the Union Territory.

4. Hon'ble Members are well aware that due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic large scale unprecedented loss of lives throughout the world is being reported daily. This has an adverse bearing on economic front too including in the Union Territory of Puducherry. The timely and effective initiatives taken by our country to prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus has been widely appreciated by many countries, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) has praised India's efforts in controlling the deadly COVID-19. In the Union Territory of Puducherry too, the Government has been taking all possible steps to contain the virus spread. In fact, the Union Territory of Puducherry announced the lockdown one day before the announcement of national lockdown demonstration starting its active role in the fight against COVID-19. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Medical Officers, Staff Nurses, other Health Personnel, Police Personnel, Revenue Staff, Civil Supplies Personnel, PWD Personnel,

School Teachers, Electricity Staff, Anganwadi Workers, Municipal Staff and all others engaged in fighting the deadly virus spread. I earnestly hope that this ordeal will soon come to an end and the Union Territory of Puducherry will be completely free from the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. On the financial front, the Government has performed well during 2019-20. The expenditure incurred in 2019-20 was ₹7,927 crore as against the total outlay of ₹8,525 crore which works out to 93%. Non-receipt of GST compensation of about ₹360 crore before 31st March 2020 is a major reason for reduction in targeted expenditure.

6. As Hon'ble Members are aware, the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is the most important fiscal indicator to measure the economic development. The GSDP of the Union Territory had been estimated at ₹37,943 crore (current price) for 2019-20 which is 10.95% higher than the previous year.

The *per capita income* of Puducherry increased from ₹ 2,20,208 (current price) for the year 2018-19 to ₹ 2,32,057 (current price) for the year 2019-20, showing a growth rate of 5.3%. I am happy to note that the Government has firmly maintained its borrowing, interest payment, fiscal deficit, revenue deficit, *etc.*, within the limits prescribed in the fiscal roadmap which augurs well for the economy of this Union Territory.

7. With this, I would like to mention some of the major programmes and achievements made by this Government under various sectors during the financial year 2019-20:

AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

8. Agriculture plays a vital role in economic development of our country and over 70 per cent of the rural households depend on agriculture and its allied activities. It contributes about 17% to the total GDP and provides employment to over 60% of the population.

9. Under the scheme "Crop Production Technology" back ended investment subsidy for paddy growers was provided to the extent of ₹1.03 crore for Sornavari 2018-19 and ₹1.62 crore for Samba 2018-19 season. Agricultural inputs were distributed to the farmers at subsidized cost in Puducherry region involving an amount of ₹23.65 lakh. In Karaikal region, back ended investment subsidy were distributed for an amount of ₹2.12 crore for Kuruvai, Samba and Thalady 2018-19 season. In Yanam region, back ended subsidy was given for paddy farmers for an amount of ₹11.62 lakh.

10. Under the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Extension, farmer oriented activities *viz.* training, demonstrations, exposure visits were organized and 1,910 farmers in Puducherry region and 2,207 farmers in Karaikal region were benefitted. In Puducherry region, under the scheme "Integrated Scheme for Development of Horticulture crops, Horticulture inputs were distributed

at subsidized cost to 111 farmers and Tissue culture banana seedlings were distributed at 75% subsidy to 260 farmers. Under the National Horticulture Mission 717 farmers were benefitted under various schemes for an amount of ₹ 56.19 lakh. In Karaikal region, vegetable seed mini-kits at 100% subsidy were distributed to 600 beneficiaries during Adi Pattam and 1,200 beneficiaries in Thai Pattam.

11. To increase the area under vegetable cultivation, vegetable seeds @ 75% subsidy were provided to 216 general category farmers. 3,818 fruit saplings like Mango, Sapota *etc.,* at 75% subsidy were provided to 469 general category beneficiaries. Horticulture / Garden tools and implements at 50% and 75% subsidy were provided to 831 general and 400 Scheduled Caste beneficiaries. Flowering and decorative plants at 50% subsidy were also provided to 1,622 general category beneficiaries.

12. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization" (SMAM), subsidy to the tune of ₹54.95 lakh towards the purchase of Tractors by 25 farmers, ₹2.20 lakh towards the purchase of Rotavator by 6 farmers, ₹7.82 lakh for purchase of 11 Power Tiller and ₹1.40 lakh towards the purchase of three cultivator were sanctioned to general farmers in Puducherry and Karaikal region. Similarly subsidy to the tune of ₹2.50 lakh towards the purchase of Tractors and ₹85,000 towards the purchase of Power Tiller, ₹45,000 towards the purchase of Rotavator and ₹50,000 towards the purchase of Cultivator and ₹1.07 lakh towards purchase of Transplanter were sanctioned to some Scheduled Caste Farmers.

13. Under the Integrated Scheme for Development, Harvesting, Recharging and Conservation of ground water, ₹37.47 lakh was spent for payment of 65% subsidy to 27 general farmers for construction of tube-wells and an amount of ₹4.48 lakh for payment of 90% subsidy to three Scheduled Caste farmers.

14. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) which is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for crop insurance has been implemented in Puducherry, Karaikal and Yanam regions. The Government of Puducherry has been the pioneer at national level to come forward to meet all the farmers' share of crop insurance premium in Union Territory of Puducherry in addition to state subsidy so as to ensure more coverage of non-loanee farmers. 4,125 farmers in Puducherry region covering 3,097 Ha. and 4,301 farmers covering 3,808 Ha. in Karaikal Region have been enrolled under the Crop Insurance Scheme. Claims to the tune of ₹ 45.22 lakh was settled by M/s. National Insurance Company Ltd., through DBT to 468 Farmers of Yanam Region who suffered yield loss during Kharif 2018.

15. Under e-NAM Project, online bidding through Mobile App has been made mandatory for crops like Black Gram, Green Gram, Thinai, Ragi and Kambu apart from Paddy. 92 licensed traders and 8,500 farmers have been registered in the Portal.

Electronic weighing machines have been introduced. Innovative electronic sticker boards have been deployed and CCTV cameras have been installed. The e-NAM mandi in Union Territory of Puducherry is the first Wi-Fi mandi in the entire South. Any farmer or trader who wishes to access data can do so free of cost.

16. Pradhan Mantri – Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme was successfully launched in Union Territory of Puducherry on the 24th February, 2019 coinciding with the national launch of the scheme by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. Under the PM-KISAN Scheme, the landholding farmers' families have been provided financial benefit of ₹ 6,000 per annum per family. So far, 9,911 farmers have got benefitted under this scheme.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND ANIMAL WELFARE

17. All the Veterinary services are being provided at free of cost through the network of field Veterinary Institutions in the Union Territory of Puducherry.

Free treatment to 2,71,501 cases of livestock, poultry and pet animals have been provided in 2019-20. Preventive vaccinations were given to 1,10,728 cases of livestock, poultry and pet animals. 59,846 artificial inseminations have been done to produce desirable future stock and 20,975 calves of desirable superior germ plasm were born. 49,500 metric tonnes of milk and 113.78 lakh eggs and 14,635 metric tonnes of meat have been produced during 2019-20.

ART AND CULTURE

18. Financial assistance has been disbursed to 139 local authors for publishing their manuscripts in literature and art. “Kamban Pugazh Award” to 10 Tamil writers were awarded during the occasion of the birth aniniversary of Mahakavi Bharathiar. Fellowship grant to 27 Research Scholars in the field of culture and linguistic background was given.

19. Week-end programme on Sundays were organized in the beach in association with Tourism Department to entertain not only the local public, but

also to attract the tourists besides encouraging the local Artists. The mega festival like *Fete-dê-Puducherry,* Kodai Vizha, National Drama Festival, Sadhana Samskrithi Yuva Mahathram were celebrated in association with South Zone Cultural Centre with participation of local cultural troupes and artists across the Nation. As a part of “Ek Bharath Shrestha Bharath” Scheme, 40 youths from Daman visited Puducherry in the month of October, 2019 under cultural exchange programme. In Ariyankuppam, the construction of Tagore Cultural Centre is at the final stage of completion and will be functional from February 2021.

CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

20. With a view to provide food security to all under the Universal Public Distribution System from September, 2015 onwards, this Government has implemented Direct Benefit of Transfer (DBT) under National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) in all the four regions of the Union Territory of Puducherry

and cash subsidy is being directly credited to the beneficiaries' Aadhaar linked Bank Account. "Antyodaya Anna Yojana" (AAY) card holders were given ₹1,050.70 per card in *lieu of* 35 Kg. of rice and Below Poverty Line (BPL) card holders ₹150.10 per member in *lieu of* 5 Kg. of rice every month.

21. Under State Free Rice Scheme, cash equivalent of 20 Kg. of rice per month *i.e.* ₹600 to each BPL/AAY card holders and cash equivalent of 10 Kg. rice per month *i.e.* ₹300 to each APL card holders of the Union Territory of Puducherry is directly transferred into their respective bank accounts through DBT since April' 2019. The expenditure being incurred towards implementation of this scheme benefitting 3.43 lakh family card holders works out to ₹16 crore per month and ₹192 crore per annum.

22. Due to the total lock down proclaimed by the Government of India in the wake of outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, people were advised to stay at

home and to keep social distancing. In order to mitigate the suffering of poor and labour class during the lockdown period, the Hon'ble Chief Minister announced immediate relief in the form of cash dole of ₹2,000 for all ration cardholders which was directly credited into their bank accounts. Accordingly, 3,44,701 card holders throughout the Union Territory of Puducherry were benefitted involving an additional expenditure of ₹68.16 crore to the Government. Further, ₹2,000 per family for all construction workers was given. Likewise, ₹1,000 was given to all unorganized workers to mitigate their hardship. The farmers of Puducherry and Karaikal region were distributed subsidy of ₹5,000. Women Self Help Groups were given loan with interest subsidy.

CO-OPERATION

23. Co-operative institutions continue to play important role in the economic development especially in rural development. In order to strengthen the co-operative institutions, this Government provides

financial assistance every year. An amount of ₹ 5.30 crore has been released as share capital to Weavers Co-operative Societies and two Spinning Mills in 2019-20. Financial assistance of ₹ 1.21 crore has been released to PONTEX to implement Weavers Welfare Schemes. Financial assistance of ₹ 3.78 crore towards Fair Price Shop subsidy was released to Co-operative Societies for the year 2018-19. ₹ 15 crore as grant-in-aid has been released to Pondicherry Co-operative Sugar Mill. A Tender Committee has been constituted to monitor and execute the leasing work of Pondicherry Co-operative Sugar Mills Ltd.

24. The Karaikal Co-operative Milk Producers Union received financial assistance of ₹ 22.50 lakh to implement the project of Strengthening / Expansion of Cold Storage facilities and Milk Processing Units under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). The Pondicherry Co-operative Building Center has opened a new branch at Mannadipet Commune Panchayat Building Complex, in Thirubuvanai.

SCHOOL EDUCATION

25. I am happy to announce that our State of Puducherry has secured the first place among the Union Territories based on the index of good governance in human resource management and on the index of total good governance. Recently, based on “quality education”, NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India), planning Commission of Central Government, under the head Sustainable Development Goals – SDG India, has published the ranking list of States. I am happy to announce that among the Union Territories, Puducherry has secured second place. Similarly, in the Performance Grading Index – PGI, released by the Ministry of Human Resource Management, Government of India, Union Territory of Pondicherry has secured 785 marks out of total 1,000 marks. This is 14% more than the earlier marks secured by Union Territory of Puducherry. It has to be noted that Pondicherry has earned more marks for good governance in the Department of Education.

26. Education and literacy are very important for the well-being of the society. Education largely contributes to the improvement of human condition through better knowledge, and thus acts as a central tool for social progress. In order to facilitate a conducive learning environment, this Government implements various schemes / measures. I would like to mention some of them as follows:–

(i) Nutritious Midday Meals is served to all school students benefitting around 70,100 students. A MoU has been signed with Akshaya Patra to provide nutritious hygienic meals to 50,000 school children in Puducherry region and this will be implemented from current academic year.

(ii) Morning Milk is provided to all school students and about 57,700 students are benefited.

(iii) Nearly 21,043 students are getting benefited under the scholarship scheme to OEBC students, and around 23,083 students are benefited under various scholarship schemes.

(iv) A guide by name “SIKARATHAI NOKKI” is prepared and distributed to the X Std. students to enable them to score more marks in the SSLC examination.

(v) Similarly, a guide by name “Vetri Namadhe” for the Science and Arts stream has been distributed to the students of XI and XII standards to effectively prepare for the Higher Secondary Public examination.

(vi) Government Girls High School, Maducarai has been upgraded into Higher Secondary School from the academic year 2019-20.

(vii) In the last academic year, Raksha Hari Krishna Government High School was upgraded as Government Higher Secondary School at Girampetta in Yanam.

(viii) Two students who were participants of the National Level Exhibition-*cum*-Project Competition were selected to visit JAPAN for a week during 21st to 27th April, 2019.

(ix) An amount of ₹1.06 crore has been sanctioned as cash incentive to 53 Government schools for achieving more than 90% results (Rural) and 100% (Urban) in S.S.L.C. and Higher Secondary Public examinations.

(x) Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATL) were established in Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kalapet, Puducherry and Thanthai Periyar GGHSS, Manavely, Ariyankuppam, and the third ATL has been established in Kalaignar Karunanithi GHSS, K.T. Kuppam at a cost of ₹20 lakh and was put to use for students.

(xi) To ensure the interest of student community, 520 teachers from Primary level to Higher Secondary level were engaged on contract basis.

(xii) Group performances like Silambattam, Self defence, Puppet Show, Band Competition, and Yoga were performed by the students. Educational Stalls like Reading Festival, Art and Crafts, Science Corner, Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, *etc.,* were put up to create awareness among the public and prizes and certificates were distributed to the winners.

SPORTS AND YOUTH SERVICES

27. A Swimming Pool with International Standards is being constructed at Saradambal Nagar, Puducherry under “Khelo India” Scheme at a cost of ₹5 crore. It is nearing completion and put to use for the Puducherry sportsmen by December 2020. Likewise, a synthetic athletic track is being laid at Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, Uppalam, Puducherry at a cost of ₹7 crore and will be completed within this year. A Central PSU WAPCOS is being engaged to execute this project. 65th National School Games Basketball Championship 2019-20 for boys (under 19 years) was successfully conducted at Yanam from 26th to 30th November 2019. Twenty nine teams from various States and Union Territorys actively participated in this championship games.

28. Puducherry school students got 3 Gold and 8 Silver medals in the 65th National School Games Championship for the year 2019-20. 56 Players (boys and girls) from Puducherry participated in the Khelo India Youth Games 2020 held at Guwathi,

Assam during January 2020. Selvi. Srimathi got first Bronze Medal in the weight lifting event. Four Multipurpose Mini Indoor sports facilities are being provided in rural areas of Puducherry under Airports Authority of India's CSR programme. The Mini Indoor Stadium at Kanakalpetta in Yanam is nearing completion. In respect of Puducherry and Karaikal regions, the tender processing is in progress.

HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

29. Higher education is the last step in formal education. It leads to many benefits including a prosperous career and economic security. And It increases the opportunity to improve the overall quality of life. The Hon'ble Members are already aware that the Union Territory of Puducherry houses many higher educational institutions both in Government and private sectors which obviously benefits the student community of this Union Territory. The long pending demand for implementation of 7th CPC to the society run colleges based on the recommendations

of the UGC and AICTE has been implemented last year which involves additional expenditure of ₹ 43 crore to the exchequer every year.

30. With the increasing demand for Arts and Science Courses in the recent years, 1,086 seats in UG and 125 seats in PG courses were enhanced last year. I am extremely happy to share that we have achieved a mile stone by increasing twice the number of seats from 2,962 to 5,939 for Arts and Science UG courses during the last four years registering 100% increase by 2,977 seats. Similarly, during the last four years the number of seats in the Arts and Science PG courses has been increased from 605 to 1,005 registering 67% increased.

31. Four colleges of this Union Territory were ranked as below by the National Institute for Ranking Framework 2019:–

(i) Pondicherry Engineering College, Puducherry ranked 76th among 969 Engineering Colleges,

(ii) Kanchi Mamunivar Centre for PG Studies, Puducherry ranked 49th among 1,304 Arts and Science Colleges,

(iii) Indira Gandhi College of Arts and Science, Puducherry and Mahatma Gandhi Government Arts College, Mahe are ranked between 101-150 th position among 1,304 Arts and Science Colleges.

32. A new postgraduate course in Chemistry (M.Sc.) has been introduced at Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan Government Arts and Science College in Yanam. Further, Diploma in Mechanical Engineering has been introduced at Dr. Ambedkar Polytechnic College during the academic year 2019-20. I am happy to inform the Hon'ble Members that this is the only institution in the Union Territory of Puducherry, in which Diploma in ECE has been approved by National Board of Accreditation.

33. I am glad that the enactment of Puducherry Technological University Bill towards conversion of Pondicherry Engineering College as Puducherry

Technological University was passed in the Puducherry Legislative Assembly in August 2019. This new Technological University will come into being soon. ₹ 15.88 crore was disbursed to 4,802 students under “Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Financial Assistance Scheme” in 2019-20 for pursuing professional courses. Last year, more than 200 teachers were appointed on contract basis. Besides, Librarians and Physical Education Directors were also appointed in all Colleges. During February 2020, Sports and Cultural Competition were held almost after an interval of 30 years. This initiative was well received by students and teachers.

ELECTRICITY

34. The Government attaches due importance to the development of power infrastructure so as to ensure uninterrupted power supply in the Union Territory of Puducherry. 110/22 KV Sub-station with two numbers of 110/22 KV, 25 MVA Power Transformers and 8 numbers of 22 KV Bays and equipments have

been technically commissioned at Thondamanatham, Puducherry at an estimated cost of ₹11.65 crore. The new 110 KV line between Pinnachikuppam tapping point and Bahour 230 KV Auto sub-station at a cost of ₹78.10 lakh was technically commissioned to improve system reliability.

35. 77 new distribution transformers of various capacities were energised and enhanced to higher capacities. 13 Kms. of HT lines and 29 Kms. of LT lines were energised and 6 kms of HT lines and 7 Kms. of LT lines were also strengthened. 8,932 domestic services, 1,226 commercial services and 23 agricultural services were effected. 242 street lights were also energised. Under Cable conversion scheme, 2 Kms. of Under Ground Cables were laid. Further, 13,000 defective / Stuck up Electro Mechanical Meters were converted into Electro Static Meters.

36. Under R-APDRP – Part-B scheme, strengthening of the power distribution system in town areas was implemented at a cost of ₹62 crore. Two 25 MVA Power Transformers were energised at Kurumbapet

and Villianur Substations and 184 Distribution Transformers were energised at various locations under this project. Further, 42,500 single phase and three phase meters were installed. Strengthening of Distribution System in Statutory Towns in Union Territory of Puducherry is being implemented at a project cost of ₹ 21.63 crore under the Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS). 100 KW Roof Top Solar panels were installed in Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam regions.

37. Under the Deena Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jothi Yojana (DDUGJY), Srengthening of Sub-transmission and Distribution network and Metering work in rural areas of Puducherry and Karaikal regions is being implemented at a project cost of ₹ 20.05 crore. In order to improve the reliability of Grid connected Substations in Puducherry, renovation and modernisation of Villianur and Bahour 230 KV Substations are being carried out a total project cost of ₹ 10.56 crore through Power System Development Fund (PSDF).

FISHERIES AND FISHERMEN WELFARE

38. This Government is firmly committed to improving the socio economic conditions of the fishing community by utilizing available aquatic resources of the State for which continuous efforts are being made by implementing various schemes and promoting marine techniques thereby providing sustained livelihood to fishermen. Some of the welfare measures extended to the fishing community during 2019-20 are discussed below:–

(i) Ban Relief Assistance was provided for ban period of 61 days @ ₹ 5,500 for 17,003 families in Puducherry, Karaikal and Yanam regions for an amount of ₹ 9.35 crore. Similarly, ban assistance @ ₹ 4,690 for 52 days ban period to 549 families were given in Mahe region for an amount of ₹ 25.75 lakh.

(ii) 8,091 aged fisherfolk were granted monthly Old Age Pension to the tune of ₹ 20.40 crore.

(iii) Reactivation charges was granted and to 374 registered steel / FRP wooden mechanized boats @ ₹ 20,000 for an amount of ₹ 74.80 lakhs and 73 FRP boats @ ₹ 10,000 for an amount of ₹ 7.30 lakhs respectively at a cost of ₹ 82.10 lakh.

(iv) Granted 75% subsidy on the annual premium paid by the registered mechanized boat operators towards insuring their boats to the tune of ₹ 10.37 lakh.

(v) 380 meritorious fishermen students who scored 75% and above in X and XII public exam were given away cash award amounting to ₹ 21.28 lakh.

(vi) Under "Savings-*cum*-relief fund", an amount of ₹ 4.52 crore was paid to 15,066 active fishermen beneficiaries @ ₹ 3,000 each for the year 2018-19.

FOREST AND WILDLIFE

39. Afforestation plays a crucial role in environment protection. To encourage social forestry, 32,000 forest tree seedlings are being planted along the roadsides, tank bunds, educational institutions, industries,

farmers' lands, *etc.* Nearly about one lakh tree saplings were distributed to the public, schools, Non-Government Organisations, industrial establishments and Government Departments at free cost. Under the Sea Turtle Conservation Programme, around 10,018 eggs have been collected and maintained in natural hatchery centre at Nallavadu and Panithittu. Among them, 9,147 young hatchlings are released in the Bay of Bengal.

HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

40. The Health Department remains fully geared up for fighting the deadly Coronavirus. The active involvement of Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Ministers Hon'ble Members of Parliament and Hon'ble MLAs in field work in the fight against the Coronavirus has boosted the morale of the Government Servant and NGOs who are in the forefront in the fight against the spread of the virus. As already stated by me in my introductory speech, the exceptional contribution

of medical personnel in the fight against COVID-19 in our Union Territory is laudable and I once again wholeheartedly express my gratitude to all those engaged in this difficult task even risking their life. Sensing the seriousness, the Government released ₹ 7.50 crore in March 2020 without delay to procure the required equipments, masks, *etc.* More daily testing are planned so as to contain the spread of the deadly virus. With the number of COVID-19 positive cases increasing day by day, I earnestly appeal to the people to strictly avoid coming out except under essential circumstances.

41. It gives me immense pleasure to share with the Hon'ble Members that the Union Territory of Puducherry stands first among Union Territories to rapidly bring about transformative action in achieving the desired health outcome as per the Composite Health Index released by NITI Aayog. I congratulate Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Health Minister, Hon'ble Ministers and all health personnel for this achievement.

42. In Neurology Department, a separate stroke ICU Ward has been opened for providing advanced health care facilities to all stroke patients with special care to post thrombolysis cases. A Separate Dengue Ward is designated in the Indira Gandhi Government General Hospital and Postgraduate Institute to handle patients suffering from Dengue.

43. The intake of seats in Mother Theresa Postgraduate and Research Institute of Medical Sciences has been increased from 16 to 30 in BPT, 12 to 30 in B.Sc. (MLT) and 15 to 20 in B.Sc. (MRIT) Courses from 2019 onwards.

44. The Pondicherry Medical Relief Society is implementing the “State Illness Assistance Fund” for providing financial assistance to the poor patients to get specialized medical treatment in Specialty Hospitals. 219 patients have benefitted and ₹ 1.52 crore was utilized under the Scheme. In co-ordination with the Frontier Lifeline Hospital, Chennai,

heart surgeries have been conducted at the Indira Gandhi Government General Hospital and Post Graduate Institute. So far, 186 heart surgeries have been successfully done on cashless medical treatment basis out of which sixteen were performed during the year 2019-20.

45. Under the Scheme Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, poor and vulnerable families are eligible for medical treatment upto ₹ 5 lakhs per family per annum for Secondary and Tertiary Care in Government and Private Empanelled Hospitals. 1,03,434 beneficiaries have been enrolled under this scheme and enrolment cards are being issued to them. So far, ₹ 1.49 crore has been disbursed to 2,645 beneficiaries.

HINDU RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

46. ₹ 1.63 crore was disbursed as *Grant-in-aid* to 45 purview and non-purview temples to undertake renovation/repair works. ₹ 25.79 lakh was sanctioned to Puducherry State Wakf Board for payment of

educational scholarship for about 1,024 minority Muslim students. Kumbabishekam was performed in 6 temples. Second edition of Temple Directory in Tamil version has been published @ ₹300 per copy which consists of vital data *viz.,* history of the temples, pooja timings, availability of sacred tanks, temple cars, contact details, affiliated temples along with historical trace of the temple concerned, temples dedicated to saints, siddhas *etc.* The work towards a detailed historical study of ten renowned temples through the French Institute of Puducherry is in progress.

INDUSTRIES

47. Needless to say, industrial development is the backbone of State's economy. This Government is focusing more on inviting new industries particularly Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises so as to generate employment for the educated and skilled youth. Under New Industrial Policy, upto a maximum of ₹1 crore

is granted as subsidy for establishment of industrial units and for infrastructure development. Apart from this, various types of incentives like interest subsidy, generator subsidy, *etc.* have been announced to attract more investment to Puducherry.

48. The Startup Policy document containing all relevant information has been notified for the guidance of the startupreneurs. The inaugural workshop was conducted by the representatives of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and subject experts. To provide skill development for the school drop outs upto the level of graduate engineers so as to make them employable, a tool-room-*cum*-Technology Development Centre has been established at Pillaichavady, Puducherry.

49. After notification of New Industrial Policy 2016, 64 proposals were considered and 36 projects have been cleared with an investment of ₹468.42 crore. Under the scheme of the Motivation of unemployed person to start self-employed enterprises (MUPSES),

155 entrepreneurs were sanctioned loan for an amount of ₹1.18 crore through various Banks and subsidy was given to the tune of ₹26.88 lakh. Under the scheme of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), 27 entrepreneurs were sanctioned loan to the tune of ₹1.50 crore and Marginal Money (MM) released for an amount of ₹50.04 lakh.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

50. Democracy cannot flourish in the absence of good governance. Technology has immensely contributed to good governance in this information age. As the Hon'ble Members are aware, the Government services are almost made available to the citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner through electronic mode. Already, the Government of Puducherry is providing around 72 services to the public through e-mode. Revenue Department is providing online services from July 2019

for getting various certificates like Income Certificate, Caste Certificate, *etc.* 57,543 applications have been received and certificates issued through on-line so far which is self-evident for the major role being played by Information Technology in the day-to-day life of ordinary citizens. Government Officials have been trained in Office Automation Course and handling of GeM portal.

51. Under restructuring of Puducherry State Wide Area Network (PSWAN) and National Information Infrastructure (NII) projects, 271 Government Offices have been provided with internet connectivity. e-Office has been introduced in the Chief Secretariat and in the offices of all Heads of Departments. On successful implementation of training on “File Tracking System” (FTS), e-Office would be operated in a full fledged manner wherein creation of files, noting, drafting, submission of files along with all correspondences will be done electronically discarding the paper work.

52. As a part of Digital India Initiatives, and in line with Government of India directives, M/s. Railtel Corporation of India Ltd., Chennai has provided free Wi-Fi facility *viz.* "RAILWIRE" at Puducherry Railway Station for public use. Pondicherry State Data Centre (PYSDC) Phase-II was set up in Technopolis Building Pondicherry Engineering College Campus, Kalapet and the Data Centre has started its operation and maintenance at a cost of ₹ 7.64 crore.

LABOUR WELFARE

53. I am happy to note that Puducherry Employment Exchange has been accredited with IS / ISO 9001 : 2008 with effect from 30-3-2010 by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). The accreditation was switched over to ISO 9001 : 2015 version with effect from 7-2-2019 by BSCIC Certificate Quality Management System. Puducherry Employment Exchange is the first Government Organisation to be accredited with ISO Certification in the Union Territory of Puducherry.

In order to augment employment opportunities to the youth, Job Fairs are conducted regularly. During the year 2019, 5 Job fairs were conducted in which 3,783 candidates participated, 576 candidates were shortlisted and 244 candidates were selected.

54. The Puducherry Un-organised Labourers' Welfare Society has 33,705 registered members as on 31-12-2019. So far this Society has covered 21,155 members in the age group of 18 – 50 years under LIC Group Insurance Scheme, Pradhan Manthri Jeevan Jothi Bhima Yojana Scheme (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Surshka Bhima Yojana (PMSBY). During the year 2019-20 maternity benefit was extended to 75 members for a total amount of ₹ 2.48 lakh and funeral assistance to 114 members for a total sum of ₹ 7.38 lakh. Special eye camp was conducted through Aravind Eye Hospital and spectacles were provided free of cost to the beneficiaries. Rain relief assistance was given in Yanam and Mahe regions.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

55. There cannot be a second opinion on the necessity for maintenance of cleanliness in our surroundings and keep the environment clean. Keeping this in view, so far 5,139 Individual House Hold Toilets have been constructed in the Union Territory of Puducherry at a total cost of ₹ 12.03 crore. Similarly, 106 Community Toilets and 111 Public Toilets have been constructed by Urban Local Bodies for ₹ 1.85 crore.

56. Under Social Mobilization and Institutional Development (SMID) Scheme, 488 Self Help Groups (SHG) have been provided financial assistance in the form of Revolving fund for an amount of ₹ 48.80 lakh. Under Self Employment Programme, 1,177 individual and group enterprises were assisted with loan of ₹ 3.73 crore. 1,607 unskilled urban poor were imparted skill training courses under “Employment through Skill Training and Placement” (EST&P) programme.

57. As a preventive measure to contain the spread of COVID-19 virus, the local bodies are tasked with maintaining hygienic environment for which separate disinfectant teams have been formed and deployed on shift basis for spraying Sodium Hypochlorite solution regularly in their respective jurisdiction. Special teams have been deployed in five check posts for the purpose of disinfection in coordination with Police and Revenue Department. Twenty nine quarantine centres have been opened to maintain the COVID affected/suspected people and four night shelters are functioning to provide shelter to the shelter less and migrant workers.

POLICE

58. It is a matter of pride that the police force in the Union Territory of Puducherry continues to remain a highly committed force with commendable performance in cracking the crimes. I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for the

untiring and selfless service of the police personnel in managing the COVID-19 crisis for the last four months.

59. Hon'ble Members are well aware that cyber crime is becoming more of a threat to people across the world. A need has therefore arisen to strengthen the forensic infrastructure. Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, has released grant-in-aid to the tune of ₹ 4.54 crore for the purpose of setting up "Cyber Forensic Lab-*cum*-Training Centre" towards implementation of the project "Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC)". In Puducherry a Consultant has been engaged to set up the Cyber Lab and purchase of cyber tools and related computer peripherals.

PORT

60. For the development of Pondicherry Port under the Centrally Sponsored "Sagarmala" Scheme M/s. IIT (Madras) has been appointed as Project Management Consultant (PMC) and the project is

likely to kick-start soon after getting the required statutory clearances. The Karaikal Port has handled 7.68 million tons of cargo during 2019-20 and earned ₹ 8.60 crore as revenue. Maintenance dredging of 1.20 lakh cubic metre was carried out at the mouth of Pondicherry Port to ensure the livelihood of fishermen. A Captive Marine Terminal Facility through M/s. Chemplast Sanmar at Karaikal has handled 10,327 tons of liquid cargo during 2019-20 and earned ₹ 10.20 lakh as revenue.

PUBLIC WORKS

61. As the Hon'ble Members are aware, infrastructure development accelerates State's growth rate. This Government is therefore keen on creation/ maintenance of vital infrastructure facilities like roads, bridges, irrigation, flood control, water supply and underground drainage projects.

62. Under Road Sector, 9 major road works for ₹ 42.55 crore consisting of seven works in Puducherry for ₹ 19.80 crore, one work in Karaikal

for ₹ 11.82 crore and one Work in Yanam for ₹ 10.93 crore, have been completed. Two major Sewerage projects for ₹ 4.38 crore, and water supply scheme with construction of Double Decker Circular tank in Puducherry for ₹ 6.79 crore have been completed. Construction of utility block and Bar Chamber with residential Quarters in Court Complex at Karaikal for ₹ 5.66 crore and River side beach development at Mahe Phase-III for ₹ 5 crore have also been completed. Renovation works for the Old Court at Puducherry have been completed at a cost of ₹ 9.60 crore. Reconstruction of Bridge across Pravadayanar Bridge in Karaikal for ₹ 9.90 crore has been completed. After much litigation, the Arumparthapuram Road Over Bride work has commenced and is expected to be thrown open for public use shortly. A newly constructed Over Head Tank in Puducherry at Swadeshi Cotton Mill premises and Karuvadikuppam has been opened for public use.

63. In order to maintain clean atmosphere and environment, twelve entire urban drainage carrier for a length of 14.15 Km. in Puducherry and six in Yanam were cleaned so as to ensure non-clogging of under-ground drainage system. The French canal Joint Scheme has been upgraded and it is named after Dr. Y.S. Rajasekara Reddy. This has been dedicated to the people of Yanam for drinking water and irrigation purpose.

REVENUE

64. The contribution of revenue personnel in fighting the Corona virus spread is extraordinary and laudable as the Revenue Department is responsible for implementation of Disaster Management Act. I take this opportunity to wholeheartedly acknowledge their untiring and dedicated service to the people of this Union Territory.

65. The Department of Revenue and Disaster Management has introduced online services to the public with effect from 1st July 2019. This enables the public to get the required certificates from the

Revenue Department easily and quickly. The Certificates which are issued through online, can be easily verified thus preventing fake / bogus certificates. The public can also apply for certificates through the Common Service Centres at the rates prescribed by the Revenue Department. As the certificates are issued with digital signature, the public can download it anywhere securely.

66. A sum of ₹ 4.30 crore was disbursed to 1,255 families as financial assistance under Rajiv Gandhi Social Security Scheme for poor families. ₹ 1.68 crore was provided to line departments of Mahe and Yanam regions for carrying out the relief, rehabilitation and restoration measures for the affected families during the floods in 2019. As a significant development, land acquisition award was passed and possession of land taken for Arumparthapuram Natesan Nagar by pass and over bridge as per new Land Acquisition Act, 2013. This will expedite the work of the long-awaited by pass road connecting Puducherry to Villianur.

67. This Government has notified “Licensed Land Surveyor and Draughtsman Rules” to facilitate the land purchaser for demarcation and identification of land. As a first step to solve the long pending land sub-division issues, Ashok Nagar of Saram Revenue Village has been taken up and a complete survey and subdivision done. Individual Patta has been issued to 483 beneficiaries. 97 eligible landless poor were identified and issued free house site pattas in Karaikal District under the Land Grant Rules, 1975.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

68. Under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). 7.65 lakhs mandays were generated benefitting 40,000 rural households. Nearly 627 works were completed incurring an expenditure of ₹ 15.98 crore.

69. Under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), so far 23,124 toilets have been constructed. During 2019-20 alone, 3,822 toilets were constructed.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

70. I am glad to inform the Hon'ble Members that Puducherry Pollution Control Committee has been ranked first among the Union Territories in the performance audit conducted by the Central Pollution Control Board as per the directions of Hon'ble National Green Tribunal.

71. In order to protect environment from the menace of plastic, Government of Puducherry has imposed ban on use of single use plastic in the Union Territory of Puducherry since 2nd August, 2019. This will go a long way in making this Union Territory free from plastic pollution and keep the environment clean and healthy. Fourteen industrial units have installed Continuous Online Emission Monitoring System (COEMS) for continuously monitoring the quality and quantity of waste water discharge and /or air emissions.

TRANSPORT

72. The Hon'ble Members of this House will be happy to know that because of various measures taken by the State Level Road Safety Council and Committees, the number of road accidents and fatalities have considerably come down by 39% in 2019 *i.e.,* 1,389 accidents and 95 deaths in 2019 as against the 1,593 and 155 respectively in 2018. This effort has been appreciated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India also.

73. Online test for issue of Learners License has been introduced in the transport offices of Puducherry and Mahe. The "Vahan" and "Sarathi" software version 4.0 have been enabled for providing online services to the public. Citizens can apply and pay fees through online for various services *viz.,* transfer of ownership, hypothecation, renewal of registration, duplicate registration certificate, renewal of driving license, duplicate driving license *etc.*

TOURISM

74. Hon'ble Members are well aware that Puducherry is a well known destination for tourists given the presence of many entertainment places like beaches, handicrafts, backwaters, heritage buildings, religious places, *etc.* This Government is implementing various schemes including Centrally Sponsored Schemes to develop tourism infrastructure.

75. The Tourism Department is executing various tourism infrastructure projects with the central financial assistance at an estimate cost of ₹ 192 crore of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India under Swadesh Darshan Scheme. The beach development works at Dubrayapet, Veerampattinam, China Veerampattinam, Chunnambar and Manapet have been completed in this year and ready for operation. Similarly, in Yanam, the tourist amenity at Island No. 3 and Sound and Light Show at Botanical Garden was completed. Improvement of Streetscapes (Phase-I).

Information Signage, Lighting of Heritage Building and Monuments at the heritage area have also been completed and opened for public use. The ongoing works under Heritage Circuit such as Beautification and extension of beach Promenade, improvement of streetscapes (Phase-II), improvement of Nehru Street and Grand Canal, Franco Tamil Village at Murungapakkam, adaptive re-use of old port godowns and Cultural Complex at Old Distillery premises will be completed by December, 2020.

76. Development of Vinorpu Annai Church at Nellithope in Puducherry and Church at Yanam was completed and opened for public workship. The remaining works under the “Spiritual Circuit” *viz.,* development of Sri Kokilambal Thirukameswarar Temple in Puducherry, development of Gangai Varaga Natheeswarar Temple, Thirukanchi in Puducherry, development of Spiritual Park at Thirunallar, Karaikal, development of Sacred Ponds at Thirunallar, Karaikal, development of Sri Badra Kali Amman

Temple, Karaikal, development of Sri Jadapureswarar Temple, Karaikal, development of pathway and ghat along Godavari river in Yanam, development of Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple, Yanam will be taken up and completed in this year. Under Mega Circuit, the works at Oussudu lake was completed and development of Arikamedu interpretation centre will be completed by December, 2020. Further, the Phase-I development of Recreational Park at Yanam tower will be completed by November, 2020 and the Phase-II will be taken up subsequently.

77. As part of Eco-Tourism Development, a boat ride from Art and Crafts Village to Arikamedu has been started to experience the “Pondy Necklace” – the Mangrove Magic of Puducherry. An amount of ₹ 18.50 crore has been sanctioned by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climatic Change, Government of India. Mobile App. and Online Tourist Information System have also been developed through NIC for the benefit of tourists. Tourist Guide

training programme for developing the Freelance Tourist Guides were organised as part of capacity building measures.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

78. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) Scheme, 6 projects have been approved under the beneficiary led construction component to construct 1,811 houses. Out of 12,912 houses approved under the PMAY Scheme, construction of 1,680 houses have been completed. Further, 3,547 houses are under various stages of construction. Capacity building programmes were conducted to equip the beneficiaries with sufficient knowledge of technical aspects in house construction and on financial literacy.

79. The Government has notified the Comprehensive Development Plan for the geographical area of Puducherry during October, 2019. This will surely help achieve economic growth, better infrastructure

facilities thus ensuring a high quality of life in the planning area while keeping the heritage, culture and form of the city intact and preserving the environment.

80. Based on the long term strategy for the growth and development and to promote multiple urban centers within the planning area, Multi nuclei concept has been adopted in the Comprehensive Development Plan for Puducherry-2036 with three Growth Centres in Madagadipet, Nettapakkam and Bahour and four Growth Points at Thavalakuppam, Karikalampakkam, Sedarapet and Kalapet. They will act as self-sustainable centers in terms of economy generation and civic amenities as well.

ADI DRAVIDAR WELFARE AND SCHEDULED TRIBE WELFARE

81. This Government is committed to the upliftment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people of the Union Territory of Puducherry so as to ensure a better quality of life to them through their socio-economic development.

Keeping this in view, this Government has been implementing various welfare schemes for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities.

82. A sum of ₹131 crore was spent in 2019-20 under the existing socio-economic welfare schemes for SC/ST community. Under the Prathan Mantri Awas Yojana Subsidy Scheme, ₹8.66 crore was sanctioned as first installment to 560 SC beneficiaries. Similarly, under the Bharat Ratna Rajiv Gandhi House Construction Subsidy Scheme, an amount of ₹3.10 crore was sanctioned in second and third installments for 287 SC beneficiaries for construction of well designed concrete house. 447 poor SC families were given financial assistance @ ₹75,000 per family to perform their daughters marriage involving an expenditure of ₹3.34 crore.

83. With a view to reducing the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), financial assistance of ₹18,000 was provided to 866 pregnant and lactating SC women

for a total sum ₹1.04 crore. SC family members who are suffering from various prolonged diseases, were given financial assistance @ ₹3,000 per month, and ₹4.62 crore was disbursed to 2,683 SC beneficiaries on this score. In order to promote inter-caste marriages, ₹2.50 lakh was distributed to 165 inter-caste marriage couples involving a total expenditure of ₹3.85 crore.

84. Financial assistance of ₹15,000 was paid to the poor SC families of the deceased persons to perform funeral ceremony. 1,055 families were thus benefited and ₹1.58 crore was spent for this purpose. Basic amenities such as roads, water supply, community hall, latrines, *etc.* were provided to SC colonies involving an expenditure of ₹18.61 crore in 2019-20.

SOCIAL WELFARE

85. This Government is keen on integrating the differently-abled persons in the main stream by eliminating all kinds of barriers. The Government is

earnestly implementing the persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in letter and spirit so as to ensure the upward mobility of the differently abled persons.

86. In the Union Territory of Puducherry, 20,546 differently-abled persons are benefited under various welfare schemes and ₹68.61 crore was spent in 2019-20 for this purpose. The monthly financial assistance is an important scheme under which 20,546 differently-abled persons are given monthly financial assistance ranging from ₹1,500 to ₹3,300 per month. Besides, various welfare programmes *viz.,* financial assistance for marriage, eye donation, funeral expenses, fuel subsidy, transport allowance, free bus pass, scholarship, cash dole in *lieu of* free gift for Diwali, reimbursement of educational expenses to hearing impaired were implemented in the financial year 2019-20.

87. The Unique Disability ID (UDID) Project of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been rolled out in this Union Territory and 973 UDID cards have been issued so far. Through various

functions organized in co-ordination with ALIMCO, DRDA and NIEPMD, Chennai, 349 beneficiaries were distributed prosthetic appliances like Tricycle, Wheel chair, Daisy player, Smart cane, Braille kit, and walker for an amount of ₹ 34.70 lakh.

88. Under Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), new own building for Government Home for Differently-abled Persons has been constructed at a cost of ₹ 2.10 crore at Saram, Puducherry. Physiotherapy units each one in Puducherry, Ariyankuppam and Karaikal with qualified Physiotherapist are functioning for giving treatment to the needy senior citizens, who are enrolled as member in the PONCARE Society, from Monday to Friday. In association with JIPMER and General Hospital, Puducherry, special camps on Ophthalmology and ENT were conducted and free cataract operations performed. Spectacles, hearing aid machines, walking sticks are given to the needy senior citizens at free of cost.

WELFARE OF BACKWARD CLASSES AND MINORITIES

89. The Government recognizes that the advancement of the persons belonging to Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities largely depends of their ability to have access to education. They constitute more than 60% of the total population of the Union Territory. Keeping in view, the students belonging to the BC, MBC and Minorities are encouraged in taking up education by providing all necessary facilities. Three Government Boys / Girls Hostel in Puducherry, 2 Boys / Girls in Karaikal and 1 Boys hostel in Yanam region cater to the needs of 235 inmates belonging to these communities at present. 2,084 Backward class students were benefitted under the scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship and 1,391 Students under Post-Matric Scholarship.

90. Seventeen backward class meritorious students in the school final examination were awarded cash prize in the name of Makkal Thalaivar Thiyagi V. Subbiah Award. Similarly, 1,640 students under

the Pre-Matric Scholarship, and 124 students under Post-Matric Scholarship belonging to Minority community were benefitted during 2019-20.

WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

91. As the Hon'ble Members are aware, this Government has been implementing various welfare schemes for ensuring the well being and sustained development of women and children in this Union Territory.

92. Financial assistance of ₹25,000 towards performance of marriage of poor brides was granted to 652 beneficiaries. Similarly, financial assistance of ₹25,000 towards marriage of daughter of destitute widows was granted to 223 beneficiaries in 2019-20. NSC certificates for ₹25,000 were issued to 78 single girl children studying VIII to X standard. Financial Assistance of ₹6,000 for pregnant women and lactating mothers was granted to 38 beneficiaries.

Financial Assistance in the form of fixed deposit for a sum of ₹30,000 was sanctioned to 244 poor parents having single girl / two girl children who have undergone family planning.

93. "Old Age Pension" scheme is being earnestly implemented by this Government. 1,54,847 beneficiaries consisting of persons of old age, widows, destitute, unmarried women and transgender are availing monthly assistance for which ₹348.64 crore was spent in 2019-20. Further a sum of ₹1.99 crore was spent on grant of financial assistance for performance of funeral to 1,993 deceased pensioners.

94. Supplementary nutrition is provided for all the 365 days to the children aged upto 6 years and pregnant / lactating women enrolled under Integrated Child Development Services Scheme through 855 Anganwadi Centers. 25,939 children and 9,458 mothers were benefitted and a sum of ₹10.83 crore was spent for the scheme during the year 2019-20.

95. A sum of ₹3.59 crore has been spent under the scheme Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) benefitting 5,469 pregnant women and lactating mothers. Under the Central Sector Scheme "National Creche Scheme", which aims at promoting the welfare of children, *Grant-in-Aid* to the tune of ₹2.68 crore was released to 95 creches run by Non-Government Organizations in 2019-20.

96. Under the "Integrated Child Protection Scheme", Grant in aid to the tune of ₹4.23 crore was released to 25 Child Care institutions run by Non-Government Organizations and ₹1.34 crore was released to 6 Government run Children Homes towards maintenance charges of 930 children residing in the above institutions. "Swadhar Greh" a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, which provides food, shelter clothing and security to women in difficult circumstances is implemented successfully through Non-Government Organizations.

CONCLUSION

97. In conclusion, I would like to assure the Hon'ble Members that this Government is firmly treading the path of making the Union Territory prosperous and free from poverty with all the resources available at the disposal of the Government. We have great challenges and I firmly hope that with your wholehearted co-operation, the Government will meet them and make sustainable progress in the near future. Unfortunately, the health emergency caused by COVID-19 pandemic all over the world has its impact on the Union Territory of Puducherry also. I am confident that the Government through its sustained efforts will certainly be able to successfully come out of this unprecedented crisis soon with all your co-operation.

98. And last but not the least, I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon'ble Members for their immense contribution in mitigating the hardship

being faced by the poor and vulnerable sections due to COVID-19 pandemic in their respective constituencies by extending various assistance on their own, even risking their lives in addition to the Government's efforts in this direction.

99. I hope that the Hon'ble Members of this august House will constructively deliberate on the various issues of importance and offer valuable suggestions to this Government.

NANDRI !

VANAKAM !

VAZIYA PUDUCHERRY !

VAZHGA BHARATHAM !

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